(b) if so, whether Government has provided any special benefits to the State Government of Bihar for various schemes; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and what other steps Government propose to take to provide special package to Bihar Government to uplift the status of backward and down- trodden people in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) There has been progress in Bihar in various sectors which is reflected in the growth of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). The Average Annual Growth Rate of GSDP in Bihar was 10.5% during the period 2005-06 to 2007-08 compared to the National Average of 9.4%.

(b) and (c) The efforts of the State Government are already being supplemented through the funding under the Backward Regions Grant Fund(BRGF). Bihar gets funding under both the components of the scheme namely, (i) the Special Plan for Bihar under which an amount of Rs. 1000 crore per annum is being provided and (ii) the Districts component under which an allocation of Rs.639 crore has been provided in the current year. Thus, an amount of Rs.1639 crore out of the total funding of Rs.5800 crore under BRGF i.e., 28% of the outlay is allocated to Bihar. The Central Government has a number of schemes which deliver concrete benefits to the poor including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Mid Day Meal Scheme, National Rural Health Mission, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the Indira Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, etc. Effective utilisation of funds available under the scheme depends on the efforts of the State Government.

Possibility of decrease in food prices

3164. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission has stressed for going ahead with the pending financial sector reforms as the liberalisation measures would not install country's growth process and anticipated rise in foreign investment flows would be good for the economy;

(b) whether he expressed concern over the current food prices led inflation which would ease in coming months with the arrival of rabi crops;

(c) whether Government has seriously considered increase in food prices which has affected common man; and

(d) if so, the steps his Ministry has taken to check these and by what time there would be a reduction in food prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) and (b) The financial sector reforms and inflation are subjects which fall in the domain of the Ministry of Finance. The Planning Commission has not sent any formal proposal to the Ministry of Finance in this regard.

(c) and (d) The Government is concerned about the increase in food prices and has taken several measures to moderate the rise in prices of essential commodities. These include the measures to augment availability of cereals by increasing the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and procurement of wheat for additional allocation under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The other measures include ban on export of wheat and rice, zero import duties on essential food items like sugar, rice, wheat, pulses, edible oils (crude) and maize, permitting the public sector undertakings to import pulses etc. National Food Security Mission (NFSM) is being implemented in 312 identified districts of 17 States from Rabi 2007-08 aiming at achieving an additional production of 20 million tonnes of foodgrains, comprising 10 million tonnes of rice, 8 million tones of wheat and 2 million tonnes of pulses by the end of Eleventh Plan (20011-12).

Social discontent and extremism

3165. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:
SHRI D. RAJA:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the expert committee set up by the Planning Commission in May 2006 to examine the development process and identitfy the factors behind the increasing social discontent and extremism has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the gist of its findings and recommendations made; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) Yes, Sir. The Expert Group set up by the Planning Commission in May 2006 on "Development Issues to deal with Causes of Discontent, Unrest and Extremism" submitted its report titled "Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas" in April 2008.

(b) The recommendations of the Report are grouped under the following heads, namely,(i) effective implementation of protective legislations; (ii) Land related measures; (iii) recommendations relating to land acquisition and rehabilitation and resettlement; (iv) livelihood security; (v) universalisation of basic social services to standards; (vi) issues related to the Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996(PESA); (vii) State response and (viii) strengthening the planning system and governance issues.

(c) The Government's policy is to have a continuously evolving strategy based on consultations with the State Governments and administration at the field level in the background of the recommendations of the Expert Group. Hence a holistic approach is being adopted which covers issues of security, development, administration and public perception. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments in this regard, 33 districts, which have been worst affected by Left Wing Extremism, have been identified for focused attention and development efforts are being closely reviewed.